# Southern States Communication Association
# 2026 Annual Convention

## "Comm-AI-nity: Conversations in the Age of Intelligence"

## April 8-12, 2026 | Birmingham, AL

**African American Communication Division**

**Vice Chair & Program Planner**: Keven James Rudrow, kjrudrow26@gmail.com

The African American Communication Division (hereafter, AACD) invites submissions for competitive selection for the Southern States Communication Association (hereafter, SSCA) 2026 Annual Convention (April 8-12) to be held in Birmingham, Alabama. We especially welcome submissions that address the convention theme, "Comm-AI-nity: Conversations in the Age of Intelligence." Dr. Narissra Punyanunt-Carter, SSCA's 1st Vice President and Program Planner, expresses the following regarding this year's theme:

> This theme blends the ideas of 'community' and 'AI,' emphasizing the evolving relationship between human and artificial intelligence in shaping communication. It encourages reflection on how communication fosters connection and shared understanding in an era increasingly influenced by advanced technologies. Papers and panels addressing these dynamics are encouraged, as are those exploring the challenges and opportunities of this new frontier.

Additionally, submissions could engage the afterlives of U.S. American enslavement (broadly speaking); the Black Arts Movement; topics in African American popular culture grounded in cultural history (e.g., colorism, representation, polyvocality, casting, audience reception, and discursive authenticity); African American vernacular discourses and (digital) communities; Black Nationalism (and its critiques); intersectional oppressions conversant with African American identity (e.g., class, gender, sexuality, and ability); African American social movements; quare theory; the perspectives and experiences of African American teachers, administrators, students, patients, doctors; and farmers; and other topics related to African American experiences and realities from communication perspectives across methods.

The AACD welcomes two submission types: (1) completed papers and (2) thematic panels. For thematic panels, please identify panelists and their institutional affiliation. Preference will be given to proposals with panelists from multiple institutions. Essays should be limited to 25 pages (including references) and should omit identifying information like author name and institution.

**Competitive Paper Submissions**
All paper submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member. For the paper to be assigned for review, please follow all of the instructions on the convention site. For the purposes of anonymous review, please omit all author-identifying information from the manuscript. All completed papers submitted will be considered for the Division's Top Paper Award. For student papers, indicate "STUDENT" on the

first page of the manuscript, and indicate "Student Paper" during the submission process. The Division's Top Student Paper will be considered for the SSCA Bostrom Young Scholar Award.

**Panel or Roundtable Submissions**
Panels and roundtables are submitted through the same process as competitive papers; just be sure to select the appropriate submission type when prompted. The submitter will be able to add other panelists as "authors" after the initial submission. Upload a copy of the panel, listing the description/rationale, panelists, and, if appropriate, panelists' individual topics; upload this at the "Upload Paper" prompt.

**Submission Deadline**
Submissions must be submitted online no later than 11:59 PM PST on **Sunday, September 15, 2025**. Access the submission site by going to the conference website (https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member) and clicking the submission link. First time visitors to the site will need to create an account. Returning visitors will need to make sure to use the same email address that they used to establish the account. To avoid technical problems, early submission is strongly advised. Any submission not meeting the above requirements will not be accepted for review. If you have additional questions, please contact the Division Vice-Chair and Program Planner **Keven James Rudrow,** kjrudrow26@gmail.com.

**New Investigator in African American Communication Award**
The AACD seeks nominations for the New Investigator in African American Communication Award. Nominees should be a member of SSCA and affiliated with the AACD at the time of nomination; be an early career scholar (no more than six years out from having earned a Ph.D.); and demonstrate a strong commitment to studying issues faced by African American people from a Communication perspective. Nomination packets should include: (1) a single-spaced one-page cover letter summarizing why the nominee should be considered for the award; (2) one support letter from a colleague, mentor, or administrator; (3) the nominee's updated CV; and (4) at least one representative publication in PDF format. Self-nominations are encouraged. The award winner will be honored during the AACD business meeting. Nomination materials should be sent to Keven James Rudrow, kjrudrow26@gmail.com by **September 15, 2025, 11:59 PM PST.**

**Information Pertinent to All Calls**
*Anonymous Review*: All papers submitted should follow standard procedures for removing any information that identifies the author and/or the institution within the paper and within any document metadata. Divisions reserve the right to reject papers not following these standards.

*Audio-Visual Support*: To maintain affordable conference rates, audio-visual support is extremely limited. It must be requested only if needed with supporting rationale, and should be part of the submission to the division planner. Requests will be considered, and are not guaranteed.

*Panel Proposals*: Best practices, in the interest of divisions, is to submit a proposal with a diverse panel, comprised of individuals representing different institutions, and where possible and relevant, potential new members.

*Submission Protocol:* Submissions to SSCA must be **<u>original</u>** research that has not been published or presented at another regional, national, or international conference. Also, the same paper or panel should not be submitted to more than one division.

*Student Papers*: For a submission to be considered a student paper and to be eligible for student awards or recognition, the author or authors of the paper must <u>all</u> be students at the time the papers is submitted. A paper co-authored by a student and a faculty member, for instance, will not be classified as a student paper.